

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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Topics of the Month

SO much has been said in Labour journals about the results of the Municipal and Metropolitan Borough Elections that one feels an apology is due if we mention the matter at all. Labour gained a great victory with over 750 gains to its credit to which have to be added, to complete the year's work, 112 seats gained at the County Council Elections, not to mention the District Council gains. Over 50 Municipal or Metropolitan Councils are now controlled by Labour.

But victory itself brings its dangers. Since the Municipal Elections we have met lots of Labour men and women who want to tell us that the victories foretell a certain Labour victory at the next Parliamentary Election. And the people who are most addicted to talking like this are those whose Parties have done least to deserve victory. It is a curious thing that the man who belittles organisation and applied effort is generally loudest in his applause of victories gained by these means. After all, the magnificent victory in London and the victories in most other places were achieved by sheer hard work and attention to organisation.

For the benefit of those who think that the harvest is coming without the sowing, may we remind them of the real facts concerning the Municipal Elections? Notwithstanding our victories, nearly 60 County Councils remain in the hands of the enemy, and less than a handful are under Labour rule; 63 County Boroughs remain Tory as against 20 Labour; there are over 250 non-County Borough Councils under Tory rule as against 17 under Labour rule; and the Metropolitan Councils are as 15 Labour and 14 anti-Labour. Examine those figures for the towns and then

tell us how can it be that Labour is certain of victory at the next General Election, yet cannot capture Local Government even in those parts of the country where its strength is said to lie.

The cold truth is that, rejoice as we may, and use our victories as we will to encourage and stimulate the forces, there yet remains a terrific amount of conversion to be done if the General Election is to bring victory. There is nothing like that zeal for organisation, for membership building, or for the "Victory for Socialism" Campaign as yet, which, as sober observers, would justify us in foretelling victory. False ideas of our prospects, while having their value in stimulating the faint-hearted, are apt to lead to the neglect of opportunities and essential work. The "Labour Organiser" does not intend its readers to be misled into thinking that the summer is here because the swallows have arrived early. We shall continue to preach the gospel of organisation.

Losing no time about the matter, the London Labour Party followed up the London victories by announcing a Conference of Borough Aldermen and Councillors, and by the circulation of a memorandum for the guidance of Labour Parties and individual representatives in relation to the new situation created by the results of the election. Taken generally, the memorandum reflects the high standard of conduct in public affairs which is axiomatic in our Movement. But there is one recommendation to which we take strong exception. A Standing Order which, we are told, has been in force at Deptford for some years is brought to the attention of Labour representatives with the suggestion that the Standing Order has worked satisfactorily. This Standing Order includes the following:—

"No father, son or daughter, of any member of the Council

shall be eligible for any office or situation in the gift or appointment of the Council, or for entering into any contract with or doing any kind of work directly or indirectly, for the Council."

That the above suggestion should have come from Labour sources surprises us. This Standing Order is anti-Socialist, and Labour advocacy for it is either quixotic or defeatist. We should like to ask the supporters of this Standing Order how long they anticipate it will be, if Labour policy succeeds, before the families of our own public representatives will have to starve because of inability to obtain work? If we understand the Standing Order aright, and it is carried to its logical conclusion, the election of a person to the office of Councillor or Alderman is immediately to carry with it a penalty to that person's children (whatever the latter's political views may be) in the form of deprivation of opportunity to serve the community in the highest form in which it can be served, i.e., employment under the collective authority. We have heard nothing so sweeping or so unjust since the Trades Disputes Act imposed certain disabilities on civil servants. Here Labour is asked to immolate at once its sons and its daughters, and to impose disqualifications which even Parliament has not thought fit to apply.

In making these strictures let it be clear that we are not pleading for jobbery. We are as interested in maintaining the purity of public life as anybody else, but the prevention of corruption can be secured by other means than Labour Councillors imposing arbitrary restrictions on certain of their relatives. The Standing Order is also so ludicrously drawn that a wife or husband is excluded from its operation. Altogether, we think that this Standing Order, dug up in a minute of exaltation, ought to be buried and forgotten as soon as it is decently possible. Under this order, the childless person, so unfortunately common in public life, can acquire unction and suffer nothing; but there is a parent's point of view all too often obscured, even in Labour circles.

WANTED.

Copies of our October issue. Credit given at prices charged. Soiled or folded copies not to be sent.

VICTORY for SOCIALISM

By this time a number of our readers will be aware of the renewed activities determined on by the National E.C. of the Labour Party in connection with the "Victory for Socialism" Campaign.

No less than fifty huge demonstrations have been planned to take place throughout the country, and local meetings comprised of representatives of Parties in the areas surrounding the venue for these demonstrations are now being convened in order to secure the greatest possible co-operation to ensure the success of the demonstrations, and to ensure that these activities affect the maximum number of electors.

The demonstrations are not to be public meetings in the normal sense, and they are expected to be really vigorous exhibitions of the Party's determination to secure "Victory for Socialism," which is the central idea of the whole campaign. Parties are asked to link up their own public meetings with these demonstrations, and this can be accomplished by associating the term "Victory for Socialism" with all meetings now being planned, by securing reference to the campaign at all meetings, and by making mention of the central demonstration at each meeting.

Other activities in connection with the campaign include the appointment of a number of campaign supervisors acting in a voluntary capacity in appropriate areas. The selection and appointment of such persons is now proceeding.

We understand also that a National Conference of speakers is shortly to be called, and steps are to be taken to compile panels of local speakers.

Hitherto, the literature side of the campaign is that which has been most in evidence, apart from the services of a number of propagandists. The publicity side of the campaign will now come more and more into evidence, not of course by way of supplanting literature activities, but by way of encouraging and supplementing them and so achieving the ultimate object of harnessing the whole of the Movement's activities in this great enterprise.

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YOUTH

The Annual Conference of the League of Youth is to be held at Transport Hall, Smith Square, London, on Saturday and Sunday, January 12th and 13th.

League of Youth Branches are entitled to appoint two delegates for the first hundred members or part thereof, with an additional delegate for every fifty members or part thereof.

The report of the Advisory Committee, and any amendments to rules and constitution, are to be taken at the first session.

The second session is to be devoted to a discussion of the problems of organisation and development of the League, and an unusual procedure is adopted: branches will send in ideas and suggestions, and the Advisory Committee will appoint a speaker who will open the discussion with a statement based on the suggestions sent in, plus any further matters thought desirable. A précis of the speaker's statement is to be circulated to branches prior to Conference. The election of the N.A.C. for next year will take place at this session.

The third session is to be devoted to a discussion of peace and war which will be opened by Mr. Hugh Dalton. The latest date for sending in matter for the agenda is Saturday, December 1st. The latest day for notification of the appointment of delegates is Saturday, January 5th.

Big efforts are being made to induce every League of Youth Branch to set up at least one Study Group this winter. A specially prepared study outline of Socialist theory will be supplied free of charge. If this outline meets with sufficient support it will be followed by a study outline on local administration.

Reports continue to reach us of League of Youth Branches where the Party membership card is either not held by any member, or is not held by all "members."

We recently discovered a branch which had been in being for several

months and had not received a single membership card. It was now coolly proposed to wait for membership cards till 1935 because the cards involved a payment of fourpence to Head Office for 1934!

We appeal to our readers for greater vigilance in this matter, for it is not good either for the League of Youth or for the senior movement that evasions should take place regarding the issue of membership cards. The League of Youth Branches do not stand alone in this matter.

12 Years of Socialist Rule in BERMONDSEY*

AND THEN—

not a single Tory gets returned!

GIVE LABOUR 12 Years of Rule THERE WOULD BE A LIKE RESULT!

Clean sweeps were also made by Labour in Poplar, Stepney and Bethnal Green. In Southwark one geological specimen remains.

*"12 Years of Labour Rule." Illustrated. Price 6d.
J. A. W. Douglas, Labour Institute, Fort Rd., S.E.1

"A little more fact and a little less headline would be an improvement in the make-up of many newspapers."—
"Justice of the Peace," 10/11/34.

HINTS FOR TO-DAY

Secretaries are reminded that in accordance with Party rules, affiliated and Party organisations must shortly be asked to elect their delegates for the Annual Meeting. In sending round to Trades Unions it is desirable to enclose a suitable form, on which to include all the information required from the Branch. An excellent form for this purpose was produced in our issue for September, 1932. The opportunity should be taken of sending a covering note with the form giving some information regarding the Party's progress and success during the past year.

If you have a good speaker booked don't fail to get a photo block. The little extra cost in printing pays. Do not use an old block. Sometimes speakers will supply a block many years old. It is far better to send to the speaker for an up-to-date photograph and go to the best block-maker in the town for a new block. We have always done this ourselves, and in some cases have actually been able to sell the block after use to the speaker himself, who was mightily pleased to get hold of it.

A card inspection in Trades Union Shops or Offices is no innovation. But what about card inspections in Labour Party meetings? We have been surprised sometimes to find that quite leading people in a Local Party were actually out of membership, and had not received their membership card for the current year. Try an inspection sometimes!

A method which is proving useful as a means to interest the rank and file of Trades Union Branches is to hold a rank and file Trades Union Conference in suitable centres. The speaker should, of course, be a person well known in Trades Union ranks, and who is able to put the case for further co-operation in the political movement in right perspective. This is the way to get more local affiliations, and incidentally to ginger up contracting-in.

The problem of how best to advertise a village meeting, whether by

handbills, posters or direct circularisation to electors through the post is simplified where the Party possesses a Loud Speaker. Announce the meeting early in the evening for two or three nights beforehand by touring the village and lanes. Where the Loud Speaker does not reach, gossip will, and the meeting will be successful.

Now the winter is on us sales of Labour Party pamphlets ought to be booming. There is a wonderful stock of cheap and attractive pamphlets now available, and for special functions parcels may be obtained on sale or return. There is no excuse for a single public meeting being without literature for sale. Every pamphlet sold has a propaganda value. Stamp the pamphlets before sale with the name and address of the local Secretary wherever possible (though such pamphlets cannot then be returned) or be sure to insert a membership form containing the Secretary's address

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COMMENDATIONS . . .

The London Labour Party as usual, issued some effective leaflets for the Borough Council Elections. They were illustrated and priced at only 2s. 9d. per thousand.

In the country the nearest counterpart to the London Labour Party are the Borough Parties in towns like Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, and the County Federations. The Borough Parties in some cases gave a similar lead, but so far as we can discover none of the Federations were specially active in the Borough Elections, largely, of course, because of their county bias. But there is a great work ahead for the Federations in enterprises of this nature if they have the mind to do it

Considerable attention was given in Birmingham to the compilation of a considered municipal policy. A manifesto embracing this policy was widely issued, and as the campaign progressed this policy became the *only* one before the electors! Eleven seats were gained.

Deptford's "Election News" was one of the most effective of the many samples of election publications which

have reached us. Thirty-seven photographs of candidates adorn the front page, and the inside is admirably illustrated with scenes and buildings in the better Deptford which Labour has created. Fifteen years of office has given Labour the opportunity to do things. No wonder Labour increased its strength.

That Labour Organisers now realise that better printing pays is indicated by many samples which reach us. The Stourbridge Division, for instance, seems to have adopted an illustrated art folder, always really well got up, as its stock means for advertising the bigger social functions such as bazaars. King's Norton also sent us a folder containing the election address of one of the lady candidates, which is a distinct advance on the ordinary type of election address. Attractive and facty it shows that the old order in election addresses has had its day.

We have received from Crewe several copies of the "Crewe News," published by the Trades Council and Labour Party. This paper makes good reading, and we wish it many future issues.

TACT

We once heard tact described as the top coat of a politician. Certainly next to sincerity tact is the most called-for quality among those who would be successful in teaching, leading and influencing people.

Tact, therefore, for the Labour man is all-essential, whether his niche in the Movement is that of philosopher, teacher, writer, administrator, organiser or what-not. Tact in handling human material just means handling it rightly. Handle human material wrongly and—well—history is full of the consequences.

A writer in the "Weekly Telegraph" says a workmanlike definition of the word is "the knack of making people feel at home when you wish

they were"—a definition we seem to have heard before.

The same writer gives what he describes as the perfect example of the value of tact in emergency by quoting the story of the plumber who found himself in the middle of a bathroom before he realised that the bath was occupied by a lady. Without revealing the slightest embarrassment the tactful plumber made a gracious exit with the comment, "Excuse me, sir! I beg your pardon, sir!"

Tact in emergency however is uncommon; it is not so common as ready repartee. Lucky is the one possessed of these exceptional qualities.

But what we will call every-day tact is a quality to cultivate; it is dis-

played and is effective in many ways. A tactless letter is a heinous offence. Such letter would seem almost as indestructible as the love letters one writes before getting wise to the job. And it casts its shadow before it!

The tactful speaker, whatever he may think of his audience, takes care not to betray that he appreciates their illiteracy. He makes his lecture so simple that they all understand it and begin to feel how wise they are. And the tactful conversationalist, interviewer, membership canvasser, collector or election caller is not necessarily one who kisses the baby and neglects the lady; his compliments have a way of getting where they are appreciated. The tactful caller never does do all the talking; he induces speech, and thus the road of approach being unmasked *his* speech is made, and success made more probable. The tactful caller in a slum area decries the houses, but praises the homes. And home sweet home may be very blessed even in a slum.

The tactful Secretary and the tactful Organiser — the men who really run the machine—never let the others

know that they do so. "Dictator" is all too ready a word for such. His Executive and his Party often think they have decided upon, or done such and such a thing. It is the tactful organiser who really hit upon the brilliant idea, and who has led his Party to adopt it.

On this subject there are always a lot of people in a party who talk a lot, and really think they count for something. They are like the "back seat driver" of a motor car. But the tactful Organiser knows his job. His feet and fingers move unseen to the right pedals and controls.

Yes, tact counts for quite a lot if the machine is to move at all.

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HOURS OF POLLING . . .

Many workers still appear to be under the impression that there exists some means for securing an extension of polling hours in Municipal Elections as there does in Parliamentary Elections. This, of course, is quite inaccurate, and, indeed, in certain Local Government elections the hours of polling may be shorter than the twelve hours poll laid down for Borough Councils.

The Election (Hours of Poll) Act, 1885, formerly governed the hours of poll at Municipal Elections. The matter is now governed by the Local Government Act, 1933, second schedule, part three, rule 3.

We note that the London County Council recently made enquiries from the Metropolitan Borough Councils as to a proposal to seek an alteration of the law on this matter. Sixteen Boroughs replied in favour and twelve were against any alteration. In view of the fact that several Councils included in the latter figure have now

been captured by Labour it is probable that a plebiscite of London Boroughs taken now would result in a handsome majority for a provision permitting the extension of polling hours.

We understand it is possible that the London County Council may include this matter in a General Powers Act under consideration for next year.

We, however, are not anxious to see this matter dealt with on localised lines, however much we may applaud our London comrades for seeking to use their great power as an influence on Parliament. If a case can be made out for London it can be made out for the whole country. Indeed, it is difficult to see on what principle a facility allowed in Parliamentary Elections is denied in Municipal Elections, where the same voters exercise the vote. We want to see any alteration in this matter made general for the whole country, and for all classes of elections.

YOUR LOUD-SPEAKER, SIR !

From many parts of the country news reached us of the good work done by the Loud Speaker apparatus during the Municipal Elections. But news also reached us of other places, without loud speakers, where general apathy and poorly-attended meetings led to a last-minute scrambling to beg or borrow an apparatus which there was no time to buy.

That the Loud Speaker apparatus is an essential equipment in modern electioneering is now realised by every electioneer whose opinion is worth considering, yet notwithstanding this, numbers of Labour Parties, despite all that has been said, and the opportunities given to them, are holding back their purchase and leaving this matter till the last minute before the General Election.

It strikes us as being sheer foolishness to delay purchasing a Loud Speaker apparatus until the election is upon us. As the cost is a necessary one the instrument might just as well be giving service now. (The Film Industries Model in the Editor's posses-

sion has not cost, in many months of operation, more than a penny per week in running charges.)

Purchased now, the Loud Speaker apparatus will pay its way before the General Election, by saving costs of printing, and in some cases costs of halls. There is the further point that if the purchase is left to the General Election, neither candidate nor speakers can be expected to immediately acquire proficiency before the microphone, with the consequence that the instrument will not give of its best, and the speakers may become as worn out as when speaking without the "mike."

There are also little knacks to be acquired by whoever is the operator in order to give the best effects outdoors. In brief the whole policy of delay is a futile, shortsighted and expensive one.

Readers who desire advice regarding the purchase of Loud Speaker apparatus may communicate with the Editor, who, in some cases, may be able to arrange local demonstrations



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WHAT SHOULD AN ELECTION COST?

This is a question which has recently been asked us, and which will be asked many times again in the five or six hundred constituencies being contested by Labour at the next election.

Obviously, the question cannot be answered generally in terms of £ s. d., for the actual sum must be particular to each constituency.

Holding this view we find ourselves at variance outright with certain Unions, and certain arbitrary persons too, who, having control or voice in a number of constituencies, lay down a flat sum as suitable to the whole of them.

In some such cases the sum provided is ample anywhere and too much in some places. In other instances of flat rate payments the sum is too little in some places and still too much in others.

Equally, we are up against those people who argue that because an election can be contested, or even won, in one place for a stipulated sum of money that such sum is all that is needed for victory in another place. Quite a lot of loose talk on this subject takes place amongst ill-informed persons, and we therefore propose to lay down the considerations which in our opinion weigh in this matter.

In the first place, it may be taken as an axiom that each time a constituency is contested a less sum of money should be necessary. Thus, if one thousand pounds was necessary in 1918, and the Division has been fought efficiently on each occasion since, one might expect the sum now expended at an election to be a matter of a few hundreds, or less. This, of course, is an expectation not a calculation, and there are exceptions to the rule. The fact that a Division has been consistently fought is only one of the factors which enter into the matter.

We are now discussing the question of what an election *should* cost, and not how much it *must* be fought for. People who start their calculations with the question of limitation uppermost in their minds are not likely to get the best balanced, well expended or even the lowest budget. Efficiency must come first and cost afterwards.

In that way cost is often found to be lower.

In seeking a right solution to the question under discussion a detailed estimate of reasonable expenditure is first necessary. Now we have seen agents draw up what they have called a budget, this being merely a total of the sums which they think are necessary to be expended under the various statutory headings. This, of course, is not a budget at all. The question is, how are the various items arrived at?

The first step is to secure copies of previous election expenses returns and to seek what lessons they contain. Afterwards take item by item of the permitted election expenses and estimate for every detail.

The first item will be "Candidate's Expenses." We need say little more about this than that the various considerations here involved ought to be cleared up with the candidate, if not at his selection meeting, certainly before any budget is prepared. The considerations need not be named here, and they are surely familiar to every practical electioneer.

The question of the appointment of Sub-Agents in County Divisions is a matter which should afford little trouble so far as the budget is concerned. We ourselves would not appoint Sub-Agents, and the question then arising is whether Area Officers, under the direction of the agent, are necessary for a group of Polling Districts, or for certain special purposes in certain localities, and if so whether payment of such persons is necessary. The arrangement we recommend is to make Clerks of all such persons.

The next item is expenditure on "Clerks and Messengers." Here, if sound organising methods have been pursued, the item expended will have tended to become less and less each election with trained volunteers ready to take on most of the work. In some places capable persons are definitely employed in election after election. We have no objection to this where volunteers are not procurable, but we suggest that in any budget where it is found that sufficient volunteers will be unobtainable, that the matter should

be reported to the Party long before the election. The lack of volunteers is a matter which is remediable, but discovery or disclosure of such lack, made only when money has got to be spent to cover it, is not a fair way of treating the question, for it does not give the Party a chance to remedy its own defects.

What we have said about Clerks and Messengers covers all that need be said regarding payment of staff. We do not believe in the payment of polling (personation) agents, or counting agents, and, therefore, we would not provide expenditure under either of these heads in any budget.

"Printing and Advertising" are expenses so closely allied as to be sometimes indistinguishable, though there are certain advertising expenses which are certainly not to be classed with printing.

There is no heading in the election budget which requires more careful consideration than this one. Questions involved are: form and quantity of election address: whether a news sheet is to be issued, and if so, how many editions; quantity and style of envelope for election address, and whether two sets of envelopes are necessary: type of poll card: limit to which special election handbills can be printed: approximate number of meeting bills, posters, etc., etc. These and a number of other considerations readily occur to most of our readers.

Another subject to be considered here is billposting, and decisions as to the general scope of any billposting campaign contemplated must be made.

There remain really only two big problems to settle, i.e., the extent of the Meetings Campaign during the election and expenditure on transit. Here, long before we arrive at what the election *should* cost, all sorts of enquiries are needed, and maybe, as with other items, there are individuals to be tactfully approached.

In preparing a budget all the items, and others we have not mentioned, should be set out at the sum which it is thought reasonable and necessary service would cost. In compiling this budget the question of economy does not arise, except as a general guiding principle. One desires first to ascertain the cost of efficiency.

When the sum total has been arrived at the question of whether economies are necessary will become apparent.

In the majority of cases it will be found that the first budget exceeds the amount likely to be available. In going through the budget again the object now should be not to seek, in the first place, *to do without* certain matters provided for, but how to obtain the same results at less or no cost. Calculations, for instance, may have been made involving substantial charges for Committee rooms. The realisation of economy often leads to such rooms being lent free.

What the election should cost in any constituency, meaning by this question, what it is proper for it to cost, will, in our opinion, not be finally decided anywhere, without the consideration of the matters we have set out above, and without several references to the Local Party in order to secure greater co-operation, greater effort or offers of one kind or another.

THE FREE USE OF SCHOOL ROOMS.

In our October issue we drew attention to the many snags connected with the free use of schoolrooms now allowed to candidates at both Parliamentary and municipal elections. We also drew attention to the unsatisfactory wording of the Acts governing this question.

Hardly was the ink dry upon our article than we began to receive complaints of unjust and improper charges made by school authorities in the recent elections. These complaints come from all over the country, and it would seem that while some authorities have no knowledge of the new Act, others having knowledge of the law have deliberately set themselves out to evade it and to make the permitted charges under the Act serve as a substitute for rent.

This business will not do, and we are profoundly dissatisfied with the present position. We shall be greatly more dissatisfied if we discover that any Local Labour Parties, or political agents, have accepted these impositions without protest. As we have before remarked, agents or Parties who are well enough off to be able to pay these unjust charges render a rank dis-service to the Movement if they do so. The time for a fight on this question is *now*.

In the future Labour is going to challenge a far greater number of

Local Government seats than in the past. But we are a poor Party, and many of the areas are small. The free use of the schoolrooms is one of the most valuable election concessions given us for many years. It is a disastrous omen for these future contests if the lethargy of well-off Parties permits this privilege to be whittled down right at the beginning.

In one amazing case we heard that one guinea had been charged for the use of a schoolroom. The charges permitted by the Act in this case would barely amount to three shillings. We have before us as we write a letter from the Director of Education in another city who coolly says that the Education Authority have fixed a charge for lighting and cleaning at ten shillings each for two small schoolrooms, the amount to be payable in advance. It is doubtful if one and sixpence apiece would be justified for these schools, and it is admitted that there is very little seating accommodation, and that the persons hiring will have to provide their own chairs.

The examples here given are, we believe, not the exception — but the rule, and we very properly ask whether the Movement is going to lie down to it?

We would point out that under the L.G. Act, 1933, an appeal may apparently be made to the Ministry of Education for the purpose of deciding what is reasonable in any particular case. We trust our readers are going to see that the Ministry receives at once a fair sample of the evasions that are being tried out.

Desperate indeed is the state of the Tory Party which in the recent elections almost universally relied principally on scaremongering to meet the Labour case. But that was not their only weapon. As we go to press we have received a complaint of wholesale bribery in a certain town where meat, drink and money was given away. In another town there came under our personal notice, complaints of widespread bribery. We ourselves interviewed one recipient along with a J.P. Perhaps we should not have got the facts here but for the fact that the lady had received six and sixpence for her vote last year, and the price this year had dropped to one shilling!

"I MOVE"

In many hundreds of Labour meetings each week the above form of words is used, and someone or other begins to lay down some work for the Secretary to do.

We protest that many instructions given to Secretaries at meetings are altogether thoughtless and unnecessary. We sat the other day and listened to a discussion on a resolution that was to be sent to the Prime Minister. What on earth the Party hoped to accomplish by giving the Secretary the task of writing that letter, the funds the expense of posting it, and Mr. MacDonald's Secretary the trouble of opening it, goodness only knows. But in less time than it takes to tell, suggestions came from the meeting as to other persons to whom the same resolution should be sent. Presently, there were seven letters instead of one, and tenpence halfpenny to be thrown away instead of three halfpence.

What with unnecessary correspondence and an unfair amount of detail work, is it any wonder that sometimes secretaries are difficult to get? Overburdening the Secretary with work is a sure road to Party decay. In a Party which is to remain vigorous and effective, *work must be shared*.

The election of the proper quota of officers is one step towards the latter end. Where a Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Literature Secretary and Propaganda Secretary have each been elected a certain departmentalisation and spread-over of work takes place.

But this is not the sole solution. We believe in the Executive not only giving orders, but doing their share of the work. We advise the various Secretaries just mentioned to ensure that Executive Members do help, and that they are *each given a job to do*.

Party Chairmen can often act helpfully in this matter. When talkers get up to put more work on the officers, an opportunity affords itself to give the mover a suitable invitation and suggestion. We are sure that by this means some resolutions will meet a sudden end, but as tending ultimately to show the Party that it is a team, and not a one-horse show, the Chairman's word at the right juncture can be beneficial all round.

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"SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN"

THIRD ARTICLE

Our attempt to arouse the Movement to a sense of its neglect of its opportunities among the child-life of the nation has succeeded, so far, in causing some other persons to give some thought to this question. What the ultimate result will be remains to be seen, but we shall not let this matter rest until we are satisfied that the Movement is awake to its appalling failure to recognise that children have minds and impulses to be trained, and that Socialism is for them *now*, while they are young.

It has always puzzled us that some people should appear to imagine that political beliefs, or even the ethics of Socialism are matters like sex, too advanced for the children to think about, and that the enquiring mind should only be permitted to know of these subjects when the time for long trousers or a permanent wave has arrived.

Many of our readers have written us, or told us, of functions which they are arranging this winter especially for children. We are glad to hear of these things. Halt a loaf is better than nothing at all. These are pioneer efforts. Regular meetings for children, the training of teachers and special speakers, and some sort of system and method will perhaps evolve later.

For the present then, nuts and cake and a Christmas tree indicate that our conservative Movement is waking up! The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. We of the "Labour Organiser" realise, however, that other mills are grinding, and that children are grist to those mills.

But here comes a letter to encourage us in our task. Print it in black type Mr. Printer. It is from a mother! And will other readers please send us their contributions?

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—How glad I am to see that our people are being urged to take an interest in Young Labour.

It is nearly twelve years since I wrote Mr. Arthur Peacock from Shildon in Durham and asked if anything

could be done. The League of Youth is a good step, but it's like trying to stop dental decay after the teeth have rotted. We must begin early. Any infant teacher can prove what wonderful things a small child can accomplish under good guidance, and as a teacher and a Socialist, I know of nothing in our Movement which cannot have its early teaching in a seven-year-old child.

My own children have been Socialists from babyhood, and have known and followed "Socialist Precepts" (Nat. Council British S.S.S. Union) all their lives and been the better for it.

Personally, I do not like uniform. I'd like to see our Young People banded together with only a badge—a red triangle, or something to typify unity—meeting regularly on week nights, singing Labour songs, doing Labour plays, learning to manage their own meetings, expressing their views on the things that matter most to them, and through it all "looking forward to the day when all men and women will be free citizens of one fatherland, living together as brothers and sisters in peace and righteousness." (Socialist Precept No. 10.)

I should be glad to have particulars of "Red Falcons." I already know of "Kibboo Kift," but have not had experience in running it.

I hope some of the "L.O." readers can supply "sample agenda" for children's meetings.

With good wishes,

(Mrs.) E. J. ROBINSON.

1 Custom House Quay,

Dover.

28th October, 1934.

(Concluded from opposite page.)

possible happenings, but this Bill would make them probable.

Lovers of liberty need to scrutinise Bills of this kind very closely, for once they are on the Statute Book they may be used for purposes very different from those for which they were intended. This Bill restricts one of our most precious rights, which lies at the bottom of our proud freedom.

"SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN."

Below we give a few extracts from recent numbers of "The Children's Newspaper." We could fill many pages with similar extracts. While Labour folk blind themselves to the bias given to the children by almost every influence surrounding them, and protest that children are "too young" for politics, here is a noble example of a great Editor who dares his capitalist employers (The Amalgamated Press) and is blazing the trail for us.

Why is it, we wonder, that in this Age of Speed everything goes too fast except the Slums?

Slower and slower is Slum Clearance, moving like a tortoise when all the rest of the world moves like a spinning-top. In the meantime children are born and children die in homes unfit for animals.

So it comes about that within a few days of each other there died the man who lost the war (Von Kluck) and the man who lost the peace (M. Poincaré).

When we consider what the League has done for us we need not grudge our share of the cost.

A poster in a church porch in Sussex tells us what our taxes are for out of every pound:

Past wars	...	...	7s. 9d.
Army, Navy, Air	...	...	3s. 1d.
Social Services	...	...	9s. 2d.
League	...	...	14th of a penny

Perhaps the best investment any nation can make is the money spent in educating its children.

It is a disgrace and a scandal that civilised nations like ours, and America too, should supply flame projectors and the most hideous forms of death-dealing weapons as they are doing to-day and have done ever since this little war in South America began.

The cost of the war was from 8,000 to 9,000 million pounds. We are paying for it still, and shall have to go on paying for many years, but it is not the money cost which is its heaviest price. It is the cost in manhood and in character and in the loss of liberty throughout the world which is the bitter price mankind has paid for this incredible crime.

There is one power only that will save the world, and it is not bombing

planes or poison gas: it is the willingness of one man, of one nation, to do unto others as we would that others do unto us.

Will not our own Government say to all mankind that noble word Brotherhood which will banish for ever from the world the hand of Cain?

In our view no part of the Empire should seek to delimit the trade of any other part, any more than one member of a family should seek to confine the trade of any other member. More important still it is to oppose any permanent policy of cutting down output to put up prices.

The chief problem is one of distribution. Consumption must be encouraged and increased to meet scientific and liberal supply. Plenty must not be checked.

Let the Government set up Boards of Supply, charged with big dealings in the primary commodities. We have done this in war with marvellous success; why not in peace?

THE SEDITION BILL.

Any club or bookstall could not display any book or newspaper which had a paragraph stating that troops ought not to be ordered to fire on strikers, and we assume that articles protesting against the bombing of natives in villages might easily be called incitement to disaffection.

But the Bill does more than this. Under it your house can be searched for copies of any documents, and certain peace books found on your bookshelves might bring you to the police court. Even some copies of the C.N. might be a compromising possession.

The right of the search opens up grave possibilities of misuse and injustice. Not once but many times incriminating documents have been placed in the desk of an unpopular writer and then conveniently found. A civilised State guards against such
(Concluded on opposite page.)

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL LABOUR LEAVE THIS ROW FOR OTHERS TO HOE?

THE S.S.S. MOVEMENT.

In accordance with our desire to give our readers a full picture of everything that is being done by Socialists to impart Socialist ideas in the minds of the young (whether we agree with the particular method or no), and in fulfilment of our promise, last month, to give further particulars of the method of working adopted by the Socialist Sunday School Movement, we now present the following information.

Limitations of space simply compel condensation and the following account, woefully contracted, is taken from the published Aims and Objects of the S.S.S.:—

"It is neither possible nor desirable to present Socialist thought in its entirety to children's minds, just as it is impossible to make them comprehend the fulness of theological abstractions; and this for the reason that Socialism is a theory of life, a compendium of scientific conclusions and principles deduced from facts relating to the history of man and society. But in so far as the supernatural ideas of orthodox teaching aim to instil into the young soul the conception and vision of a reward and happiness awaiting suffering and distracted humanity in a world to come, based on certain beliefs which imply a divine ordinance of the chaos and injustices set up by man in this: so, the Socialist Sunday School aims to imbue the young with the sentiment and imagery of a Kingdom of Love and Happiness to be set up *here* on this earth, based on just or righteous social and economic conditions.

"Whilst the Socialist Sunday School teaching is non-sectarian, and pretends to no positive knowledge regarding the great and as yet undiscovered source of all life, ours is the responsibility to guide the feet of the children in the path of eternal progress. Our Bible is the literature of the wise, the good; the inspired writings of all ages, creeds and climes.

"The scheme at present adopted for the very small children is to chat with them, show picture books, sing with them, and above all to love them. We realise that *ideas*, thought images, and words wherein to express them, are the immediate need of the very little ones.

"We classify the children broadly on a basis of age, making such alter-

ations in individual cases as are necessary. From seven to about eight and a half the homely fairy and folk story, always dealing with personalities, always indicating broadly the beauty of unselfishness, with the moral left to penetrate as it may.

"We endeavour to capture and utilise the intense love of the heroic that shows itself in children from about eight years of age. We begin with simple stories of kindness, courage, self-sacrifice, drawn from the literature of all nations.

"After this, literature dealing with the heroes who opened up communication between peoples, thus revealing to the children, just at the time when they are beginning to ask, the extent of the earth with her great family, their brothers.

"We go on to read such stories as the "Story of Ab," "Hiawatha," "The Story of Tig," in answer to the many inquiries arising as to the beginning of things. Our aim here is to point to the essential facts underlying society, viz., the production of food, clothing, and shelter.

"At fifteen, or thereabouts, the boys and girls have sometimes a course of reading of authors dealing convincingly with the impoverished side of life. Here some attempt is made to gather together their ideas as to the causes underlying the misery and ignorance depicted. These young people are now launched out on the sea of life, all are now on the market of Labour; already they know what the struggle for a livelihood means. We lead them to reason into their own surroundings and attempt some analysis. Nothing is forced, however.

"At sixteen or seventeen literature dealing still more plainly with the problems of working-class life is read. Side by side with "Alton Locke," "No. 5 John Street," "Picture Book of Evolution," "From Palæolith to Motor Car," F. J. Goud's "Moral Lessons," "News from Nowhere," "Looking Backward," More's "Utopia," "The Meaning of Socialism," etc., are read. Next follows a course on Social Reformers Charles Kingsley, Robert Owen, Karl Marx, Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Edward Carpenter, Thorold Rogers, Henry George, and other advanced thinkers."

The S.S.S. is not an organisation

(Concluded on page 214.)



QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE

Vacancy on Resignation.

Question: Could you inform me whether a Borough Council may declare a vacancy to exist following the receipt of a Councillor's resignation without the necessity of two electors declaring the vacancy?

I do not feel certain from a reading of the 1933 Local Government Act whether a Town Council may declare such a vacancy to exist or whether it is essential for two Local Government electors to signify this. I have had some discussion on this point with the local Town Clerk and the latter insists that two local government electors must declare the vacancy.

Answer: Casual vacancies on Borough Councils occur from quite a number of causes. Under the older law considerable doubt existed as to the means for securing an election when a seat became vacant under certain circumstances. The whole matter was fully discussed in our issue for July, 1929.

The old ambiguities have, however, now been swept away, and Sections 65, 66, 67 and 68 of the Local Government Act, 1933, leave no doubt as to what is now the right course in every eventuality.

In certain cases such as death, a vacancy is deemed to occur on the happening of the event. In some other cases the vacancy must be "declared." A vacancy may be declared by the Council itself, or by the High Court.

In all the cases where a vacancy is deemed to have occurred (i.e., in cases of non-acceptance of office, resignation—which is what our correspondent asks about—death, conviction, petition or on acceptance of aldermanship) it is necessary, in order to secure an election, for two electors to give notice of the vacancy to the Town Clerk.

Where a vacancy occurs because it

has been "declared," no notice by electors is required, and the election must take place within thirty days from the date of declaration—except, of course, where the vacancy occurs within six months of the ordinary day of retirement.

Press at Party Meetings.

Question: We are having a selection meeting next month, and I should be glad if you could let me know whether we ought to admit the Press to this meeting. Some of our Executive think the meeting should be thrown open to the Press; some of them think that the Press should be admitted only to hear the speech of the candidate (there is only one up for selection), and others think that a statement should be issued to the Press following the meeting. What do you think we ought to do?

Answer: On general principles we are against the admission of the Press to any and every meeting of the Party. Party business which, after all, is private, cannot be conducted with freedom when reporters are present.

In regard to a selection meeting there is a Party rule which has a bearing on this question. The rule says that the selection of a Prospective Candidate shall not be regarded as complete until endorsed by the National E.C., and until such endorsement has been received the Prospective Candidate must not be introduced to the public. It is clear that the admission of the Press to a selection meeting can only lead to a premature and improper announcement.

We have sometimes had expressed to us the point that there was going to be no doubt about the selection, and that the Party had already made up its mind. We do not see that this affects the general position in any

way. A selection meeting is, after all, or should be, the time when the suitability of the nominee is finally decided upon. Too often one notes a case of selecting in haste and repenting in leisure. Questions have to be put to candidates at meetings, and even an eleventh-hour refusal of a nominee by the Party is always possible.

Our advice to our correspondent, therefore, is to keep the Press at arm's length until a public meeting is arranged

ANSWERS IN BRIEF.

A.—*Leeds*. J. Renwick Seager was the author of several useful little books. Among the subjects were "Notes on Registration"; "County Council Elections"; "Corrupt and Illegal Practices"; "Registration of Voters Under the Reform Act, 1918"; "Municipal Elections"; "Parliamentary Elections." The latest edition of any of these books is 1921. For Labour use we recommend "Conduct of Elections," published by the Labour Party at 5/-.

A.—*Leeds*. We are afraid there is no market for your old law books. Later editions of all the books you name have been published. The companion books, "Municipal Elections And How to Fight Them" and "Elections And How to Fight Them," both of which were published in 1909, have now very little practical value. The legal matter is out of date, and newer methods of conducting elections are in vogue.

F.—*Liverpool*. A steel filing cabinet is not fire-proof, though it may protect, except in a very bad fire, your papers from complete destruction. It is certainly an unsafe receptacle for the large sums of money you keep on hand. Our advice is to buy a good safe, or better still enquire of one of the banks in your town as to whether there is a Night Safe apparatus attached to their premises.

E.—*Bristol*. We do not think that an ordinary Working Men's Club is a political club within the meaning of the Statute, permitting its use as a Committee Room at a Parliamentary Election. In any case, the premises,

being licensed, may not be used for this purpose at a Local Government Election.

F.O.—*Hants*. We see no objection to the issue of a periodical letter to the electors by your Prospective Candidate. Great care, however, must be taken to see that the matter is confined to the education of the electors in the principles of the Party. Matter which appeared to constitute an appeal for votes at the General Election, or even the general advice to vote Labour at the General Election, might involve serious consequences. Such publication might in fact be held to be an election expense, and having commenced the election other considerations would be involved, raising a number of embarrassing situations. An urge to support Local Government candidates, or advice to vote for particular Local Government candidates, would not incur the consequences we have in mind.

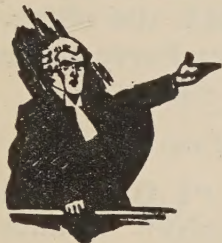
M.C.—*Yorkshire*. Your suggestion to decorate a handcart and to make a good display thereon of Party literature, and to take same accompanied by literature sellers outside works gates on Saturdays, is a good one. If your sellers are live people good sales should result. We are not sure, however, that a hawker's or peddler's license would not be required, and you had better consult the police authorities on this question.

**The L.O. wants
1,000 NEW READERS**

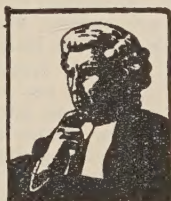
Will you help?

(Concluded from page 212.)

which leaves the selection and quality of its teachers to chance. There are classes for adults and teachers, and whatever further steps Labour may take when it realises the full significance and effect of its general failure to cater for the children, this question will be of first importance; and of great import too. The "Notes for Teachers," published by the S.S.S. strike us as something exceptionally well done.



LAW AND PRACTICE



THE DECLARATION OF SECRECY

At the recent Municipal Elections many hundreds of our readers will have taken, for the first time, the new form of declaration of secrecy as prescribed for Local Government Elections by the L.G. Act, 1933. The difference between the old declaration and the new one was that the reading over of Section IV of the Ballot Act to the declarant was an essential part of the process of declaration.

This provision is now repealed, and Section IV has been re-drafted and embodied in the Local Government Act, 1933. The declaration, therefore, now makes reference not to the Ballot Act, but to the appropriate sections in the L.G. Act, and the declarant is only required to have read those sections over to himself.

Some people have a very hazy idea as to the restrictions the declaration of secrecy actually imposes on them. Some treat the oath of secrecy altogether too lightly, while other people credit the oath with having forbidden all sorts of things, which, after all, they are quite free to do. The oath and prohibitions for both Parliamentary and Local Government Elections, despite the different wording, mean substantially the same thing, and it is, therefore, useful to see just exactly what is prohibited. For the exact wording of the Acts readers should turn to Ballot Act, 1872, Section IV, 1st schedule, Rule 54; and to L.G. Act, 1933, 2nd Schedule, Part III, Rule 54, and 2nd Schedule, Part IV, Form C.

In the first place, it will be noted that candidates, as candidates, do not require to be sworn into secrecy. If, however, the candidate is appointed or acts in one of the capacities where

swearing in is necessary, he also must be sworn in.

We will now set out in simple language what the oath really embodies. These things are (1) To maintain and assist in maintaining the secrecy of the voting. (2) To refrain from communicating *before the poll is closed* any information as to the name or number of an elector who has not applied for a ballot paper or voted, or from communicating the official mark. (3) To refrain from attempting to ascertain at the count the number on the back of any ballot paper, or from communicating any information obtained at the counting of the votes as to how any person has voted. (4) To refrain from interfering with a voter when marking his vote, or *attempting to obtain in the polling station* information as to how any voter is about to vote. (5) To refrain from communicating *at any time* any information obtained in a polling station as to the candidate for whom any voter has voted, or as to the number on the back of any ballot paper. (6) To refrain from inducing any voter to show his ballot paper after he has marked same. The above condensed summary will do for our present purposes.

We have sometimes received complaints that a polling clerk has not been allowed to leave a polling station and to take with him his marked copy of the register. The explanation is to be found in the oath that he has taken, for if he takes such copy out with him there is reasonable fear that he will communicate the name or the number of some person who has or has not applied for a ballot paper. Indeed, we have heard the appointment of polling agents urged solely on the ground

that they would be able to ascertain who had or who had not voted, and pass the information to the Committee Room so that voters should be fetched up. This is clearly illegal.

What also is a breach of the oath and an offence by any person, whether sworn or not, is an attempt to obtain in the polling station information as to how a person is going to vote. Here is a remedy that can be applied against the village tyrants, male and female, who, in some districts, actually invade the polling booth itself and seek to influence the voter. Not only is the presence of such people illegal, but the attempt to obtain information in the booth is a definite offence.

It will be noted that after the polling is over no offence is created by disclosing the nature of the official mark or the names or numbers on the register of persons who have or have not voted.

Regarding the counting of the votes, it is no offence to note the numbers who have polled at any particular station, nor if the opportunity occurs, to note down matters which affect the interests of the candidates

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of your Party get the
“L.O.”?**

If not, why not?

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or of one's Party, and which information will be of value afterwards. The essence of the prohibitions are that one must not attempt to ascertain how any particular person has voted, or to note the number on the back of any ballot paper.

It has been said sometimes that the person who gives a signal to outsiders as to how the voting has gone is guilty of an infringement of his oath of secrecy. However indiscreet or discourteous such person may be the act mentioned is not an offence.

REVIEWS

“Political Parties and Policies.” By E. Royston Pike. Price 2/6. Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd.

No author can set himself a more difficult task than to attempt to give an entirely impartial guide to current politics; and any reviewer who passes judgment on the success or otherwise of such a task has himself to emulate the author's impersonality and seek a detachment from principles and prejudices — an effort which succeeds mainly in a realisation of how hard the task really is.

Yet had “Political Parties and Policies” been written by diverse authors, each expounding the creed and policies of his particular Party, we should not have had that sober and sufficing analysis of each great national contestant, which this book contains. We have been critical in the reading of Mr. Pike's work and yet can find no fault in the presentation. It is a book to place in the

hands of that great public who only think superficially about politics, and are marvellously ill-informed as to the general tendencies, leave alone the historical impulses and basic principles of the Parties of to-day.

The publishers suggest that the book is also one to be recommended to senior students in public, secondary and elementary schools. Well, we know of no other book so suited for this purpose. Most works on political theory are biased, notwithstanding all the efforts of their authors, and there is very little of a simple and readable nature which puts before the budding citizen the essential points in political policies, and does so in a way that the reader might take his choice.

We should like to see this book on Labour bookstalls, for it is not at all a bad thing that Labour advocates should read a dispassionate study of their own Party along with similar studies of its rivals.